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DIRECTORATE OF
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Intelligence Memorandum

*Recent Communist Logistical and Manpower
Developments in Indochina*

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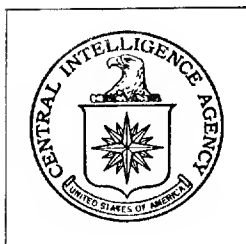
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**Recent Communist Logistical
and Manpower Developments
in Indochina**

For the first time in several months, regular combat infiltration groups were detected in North Vietnam destined for South Vietnam's MR 1. In contrast, the infiltration system which serves Cambodia and the southern half of South Vietnam is being cleared of infiltrators in preparation for the normal wet season closedown.

- The two new regular infiltration groups contain a total of about 1,000 personnel. In addition, the numbering sequence used suggests that another 2,500 combat troops may also have entered the pipeline destined for MR 1 since late February.
- The signs that regular infiltration is drawing to an end elsewhere in Indochina include the closing of several way stations in southern Laos and northeast Cambodia and reports that no further regular infiltrators are to transit the system into Cambodia and southern South Vietnam.

As the rainy season begins to bear down on the more southern parts of the Communists' resupply system, Communist logistical activity also will be increasingly affected. But as of now, it is continuing at a fast pace. During the past week:

- There was heavy activity throughout southern Laos, and hundreds of tons of supplies moved through the tri-border area toward both the central highlands of South Vietnam and northeastern Cambodia.
- Heavy resupply activity and large ordnance stockpiles were again noted in South Vietnam's MR 1.

Note: Comments and queries regarding this publication are welcomed. They may be directed to [redacted] the Office of Economic Research, [redacted]

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DISCUSSION

Recent Logistical Developments

North Vietnam

1. Military supplies continue to move south through the Hanoi area. During late April [] stacks of supplies flanking the roughly 35-mile-long rail segment south of Hanoi to Phu Ly. In addition to sacks of rice (some of which bore Chinese markings), numerous wooden crates bearing Latin letters and arabic numerals and containing unidentified supplies were observed. Route 1A, which parallels this stretch of railroad, was being heavily used by cargo-carrying trucks. Among the equipment detected moving south were antiaircraft weapons (23-mm, 37-mm, and 57-mm) and some 32 armored personnel carriers. Both the 23-mm guns and some of the armored personnel carriers were identified as of Soviet manufacture. []

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[] it is only since the cease-fire that substantial numbers of 23-mm weapons and armored personnel carriers have begun to appear in North Vietnam; however, equipment of these types has been in the North Vietnamese inventory for some time.

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2. The movement of significant quantities of ordnance was detected in the Vinh area on 12 and 13 May.* Elements of Binh Tram 18 reported the receipt of eight rail car loads of ammunition; nearly 200 tons of supplies -- including 122-mm rockets, 60-mm mortar, and 57-mm antiaircraft ammunition -- were involved in the deliveries. The ammunition was moved to a storage facility which handles cargo for South Vietnam and northern Laos.

3. There may also have been a resumption of tank movements south from the Vinh area. Intercepted communications on 6 and 7 May revealed that tanks were operating on a road which leads southwest of Vinh toward the Laotian border. Whether they were in the initial stage of deployment to Laos or simply the augmentation of tank inventories in southern North Vietnam remains unclear.

4. In extreme southern North Vietnam, the high pace of Communist logistical activity continued. Vehicles continued to transit the Giang River

* Unprecedented quantities of ordnance moved south through the Vinh area before the South Vietnam cease-fire, and equally impressive quantities moved to northern Laos during the interval between the South Vietnamese and Laotian cease-fires. But since then there have been few detected ordnance movements in the Vinh area; most of the major shipments detected recently have been farther south, around Dong Hoi.



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[redacted]

vehicle checkpoint near Dong Hoi, and there were further indications that the cargo being moved through the area included ordnance. An intercept of 11 May from Binh Tram 26 (in the Dong Hoi area) revealed that 275 tons of weapons and ammunition had arrived at one storage facility thus far in May.

Southern Laos and Northeast Cambodia

5. The current transportation offensive appears to be centered in the tri-border area of Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam; but its impact is being felt throughout the entire southern Laos/eastern Cambodia area. Detected vehicle movements from North Vietnam to southern Laos remain at a substantial level. Photography continues to reveal high truck counts on Route 912, south of Ban Karai Pass; and on Route 1033, which enters Laos west of the DMZ, [redacted] an average of 21 southbound movers daily between 2 and 8 May. A dry season high of 51 southbound detections was recorded on Route 1033 on both 4 and 11 May. Rains have recently begun to affect road conditions in the pass areas, but the tenor of most intercepts indicates that the transportation effort is not being seriously impeded.

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6. In the central Laotian Panhandle, an area overseen by Group 472, photography continues to reflect very high levels of vehicle activity. In conjunction with the recent transportation offensive -- which kicked off in the Group 472 area on 5 May -- large numbers of vehicles were detected moving daily on the central route corridor (Routes 99, 9211, and 958) early in the reporting period. It is not clear whether a decrease in daily detections on these roads at the end of the period reflects changing priorities or simply a lull in activity. The North Vietnamese indicated in early May that Route 23 to the west would play a primary role in the current campaign, and since then the first significant sightings of vehicle convoys this dry season have been detected on that route.

7. Some evidence of the numbers of vehicles moving south through the central Panhandle was provided on 9 May when Group 472 revealed that during a recent time period 300 to 350 vehicles had been dispatched to Group 471 to the south. COMINT from the Laos/South Vietnam border region also indicates that additional large quantities are moving from Laos into the A Shau Valley region of South Vietnam's MR 1. Between 1 and 6 May, over 1,000 tons of cargo -- about half identified as foodstuffs -- were moved there.

8. Currently, the heaviest Communist logistical activity appears to be in the tri-border area and northeastern Cambodia, a region overseen by Group 470. To help sustain the pace, the Group has supplemented its vehicle inventory, and a major logistical entity subordinate to Group 470 --

[redacted]

Binh Tram 51 -- has been reactivated from its recent dormant state to assume unknown responsibilities in the tri-border region. Moreover, there are now indications that new elements of Group 470 have emerged in South Vietnam's B-3 Front, the ultimate destination of much of the cargo currently moving.

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9. [redacted] photography over the tri-border region revealed that both Route 96/110, from southern Laos to the B-3 Front, and Route 975, from Laos into Cambodia, were sustaining very heavy truck traffic. Although recent rains have resulted in standing water on some segments of the roads, the photography and COMINT indicate that it has had virtually no effect on the high level of vehicle traffic. Nevertheless, the rains have made the logistical chore more difficult for the North Vietnamese. On 8 May, an intercept from the Group 470 engineer section complained that there had been rain on all but one day since the first of May. During that period, several messages reflected Communist difficulties resulting from muddy and slippery roads. To help alleviate the problems, Group 470 reported that some roads were being graveled as of 11 May.

10. There have been a large number of Communist messages detailing the supply deliveries. One element in the tri-border area reported that at least 800 tons of cargo had been dispatched to the B-3 Front, and 120 tons were dispatched south to Cambodia. An additional 250 tons of cargo were in storage awaiting transshipment. Dozens of other intercepts have reflected this high -- perhaps unprecedented -- transportation effort in the tri-border/northeast Cambodia area. They reflect both the northbound delivery of foodstuffs out of Cambodia and the southward movement of ordnance and underline the importance of this "urgent" mission.

11. Still farther south, indicators of Communist logistical traffic through eastern Cambodia, toward southern South Vietnam, show no evidence that the high level of resupply apparent in recent weeks is subsiding. As in the areas to the north, standing water is beginning to become noticeable on some roads as a result of the recurring rains. However, mechanized road repair equipment is being effectively used by the Communists to maintain the road network and allow the sustained transportation effort despite the wet weather and the heavy US aerial interdiction campaign.

South Vietnam

12. Evidence of very high levels of Communist logistical activity in South Vietnam's MR 1 was again noted during the week. Highlights included a reference in COMINT to vehicles going from MR 1 to southern North Vietnam to pick up unidentified types of cargo and the reported

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delivery on 4 and 5 May of 64 vehicles carrying ordnance south of the Quang Tri City area. These vehicles could have carried a total of 250 tons of cargo.

13. There has been further evidence of large supply stockpiles along the South Vietnam/Laos border. A 12 May message referred to 2,500 tons of ordnance in storage at one area; however, we do not know if this is in addition to the nearly 7,500 tons of ordnance reported in three storage areas in the same vicinity in recent weeks. Reflecting the pitch of activity, one logistical element in the border area reminded an associate that it "absolutely may not allow any good vehicle to remain immobile."

14. Large quantities of supplies are apparently scheduled to move into MR 1 via Laos. On 9 May the North Vietnamese stated that Routes 1032, 92, and 9 in Laos would be heavily utilized to move cargo. Route 1032 was undergoing some repair, but Route 9 was reported already in good condition. According to the intercept, 300-400 vehicles are to move daily (for an unspecified duration) via this corridor which makes an end run around the western DMZ.

15. The Communists are continuing to place a high priority on new road and base area construction. Newly reported projects in MR 1 include the enlargement of several supply areas in the southern part of the A Shau Valley and adjacent areas in Laos. New roads under construction in the coastal lowlands north of Da Nang are intended eventually to hook up with Route 614, which is also being extended southward through western Quang Nam Province. And in southern Quang Ngai Province a 100-man Communist labor group is reportedly upgrading Route 515, a vital part of the transportation system used to support the 2nd NVA Division.

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16. In the highlands of MR 2, [redacted] during March the Communists were improving Route 512 and other feeder roads into Kontum Province from the tri-border area. (Route 512 connects Route 110 in Laos with Route 14 in South Vietnam about 25 miles north of Kontum City.) These roads were reported to be supporting regular truck and tank traffic at that time. With the current very heavy resupply effort being directed toward the B-3 Front from Laos, the pace of activity there remains brisk.

17. In southern South Vietnam, the Communists are apparently continuing their unrestricted use of major roads in northern MR 3 to push large quantities of goods across the border from Cambodia. Several South Vietnamese province chiefs in MR 3 have recently expressed concern over the Communist military buildup, noting in particular the numerous tanks, heavy artillery, and antiaircraft pieces moved into the region in the past

several months. Government officials in MR 3 have issued a general reprimand to South Vietnamese merchants for selling large quantities of food and petroleum to the Communists.

Manpower Developments in Indochina

Personnel Infiltration

18. The infiltration of combat troops to South Vietnam has resumed, at least for the time being. On 12 and 14 May, two regular infiltration groups were detected at Vinh. Groups 4008 and 4009 -- with 520 and 470 personnel, respectively -- are en route to MR Tri-Thien-Hue in northern MR 1. These are the first regular groups detected entering the pipeline in North Vietnam since 11 March. The new groups permit five others to be gapfilled, groups which probably moved south undetected between late February and 11 May. This adds some 3,500 personnel to our 1972/73 infiltration estimate. The number of combat troops which have started their journey south since the cease-fire now totals about 14,500.

19. Additional infiltration to MR 1 may be planned. If so, a pattern similar to that of the summer of 1972 could emerge. During the 1971/72 infiltration cycle, a lull in the southward movement of combat personnel was noted between mid-April and early May. After that lull, the detection of regular infiltration groups resumed and later rose to high levels through the summer. Most of those groups were also destined for MR 1, where the weather remains dry throughout the summer.

20. In contrast, a number of recent messages from the North Vietnamese communications-liaison system in the southern part of the Laotian Panhandle and northeastern Cambodia indicate that the infiltration of combat troops to the B-3 Front and the COSVN area will be terminated for the rainy season. This would follow the pattern observed during previous rainy seasons, when the movement of southbound infiltrators to these areas was either stopped or sharply curtailed. At least four communications-liaison battalions recently have been told by higher headquarters that they were not to receive any more southbound personnel and were ordered to dispatch any infiltrators who currently remain in their areas of operation. Moreover, Group 470 -- which oversees infiltration and logistics movements in the extreme southern part of the Panhandle and northeastern Cambodia -- was recently told by the headquarters of MR 559 that, after Group 2008 had "cleared the system," no new infiltration groups would be sent south.

21. During the past week, 28 new special-purpose infiltration groups -- with an estimated aggregate strength of 650 -- were initially detected in the pipeline. Six of these groups, with a total of 90 specialists,

were noted at Vinh on 13 and 14 May -- a higher-than-usual number for a two-day period -- while the other 22 groups were detected at various points in the Laotian Panhandle. More than half of the special-purpose groups that were detected during the past week are destined for the COSVN area.

22. As a result of the recent detections described above, our estimate of infiltration starts (both combat and special-purpose groups) since the cease-fire now stands at more than 20,000. These infiltrators, plus those who were in the pipeline as of 27 January (25,000), bring the total number of personnel detected moving toward South Vietnam since the cease-fire to some 45,000 personnel. Tables 1 and 2 show our estimates of infiltration starts since 1 September 1972 and 1 January 1973, respectively.

Table 1

Infiltration Starts, by Season

Destination	1 Sep 71 - 13 May 72	1 Sep 72 - 13 May 73
Total	117,000	89,500
MR Tri-Thien-Hue	19,000	29,500
MR 5	16,000	9,000
B-3 Front	30,000	14,000
COSVN	38,000	26,000
Southern Laos/MR 559	14,000	11,000

Table 2

Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline
Since 1 January 1973

	Total ¹	Special-Purpose ²
1-7 Jan	4,700	400
8-14	3,700	350
15-21	6,100	500
22-28	4,000	150
29-4 Feb	6,300	400
5-11	3,100	250

Table 2

Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline
Since 1 January 1973
(Continued)

	Total ¹	Special-Purpose ²
12-18	2,000	850
19-25	500	500
26-4 Mar	750	750
5-11	1,300	300
12-18	550	550
19-25	650	650
26-1 Apr	300	300
2-8	275	275
9-15	500	500
16-22	150	150
23-29	1,000	0
30-6 May	1,775	275
7-13	1,100	100

1. Including gap-filled groups, except Groups 7001 through 7009. Assuming that these groups departed between 1 January and 10 March, some 4,500 combat troops would be spread over the departures estimated for those weeks.

2. Including those groups which were initially detected without a specific strength but which have been assigned an average strength of 35.

Manpower Developments in Cambodia

23. The Khmer Communists (KC) are continuing to develop and expand their force structure. Recent COMINT has revealed the existence of two additional KC regiments - the 152nd and the 267th -- bringing the number of currently operational KC regiments to at least seven. The two units, which are operating south of Phnom Penh along Route 2, have strengths (1,500 and 1,700, respectively) approximately twice as large as those previously observed for other KC regiments. The recent success of Communist multi-battalion and multi-regimental operations in Cambodia probably will encourage the KC to accelerate the formation of regiments and possibly to formalize existing "battlefield committees" (which currently control multi-regimental operations) into divisions.

Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

South Vietnam

Regular Combat Forces

VC/NVA ¹	RVNAF ²	VC/NVA	RVNAF
163,000	287,000	80,000	85,000

325th
324B
320B
304th
711th
2nd

VNMC
Airborne
1st
2nd
3rd
Regional
Forces

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

2. Revised RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes present for duty personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions.

MR 2

VC/NVA	RVNAF
29,000	57,000

320th
10th
3rd

23rd
22nd
Regional
Forces

MR 3

VC/NVA	RVNAF
27,000	67,000

429th Sapper
Command
9th
7th

25th
18th
5th
Regional
Forces

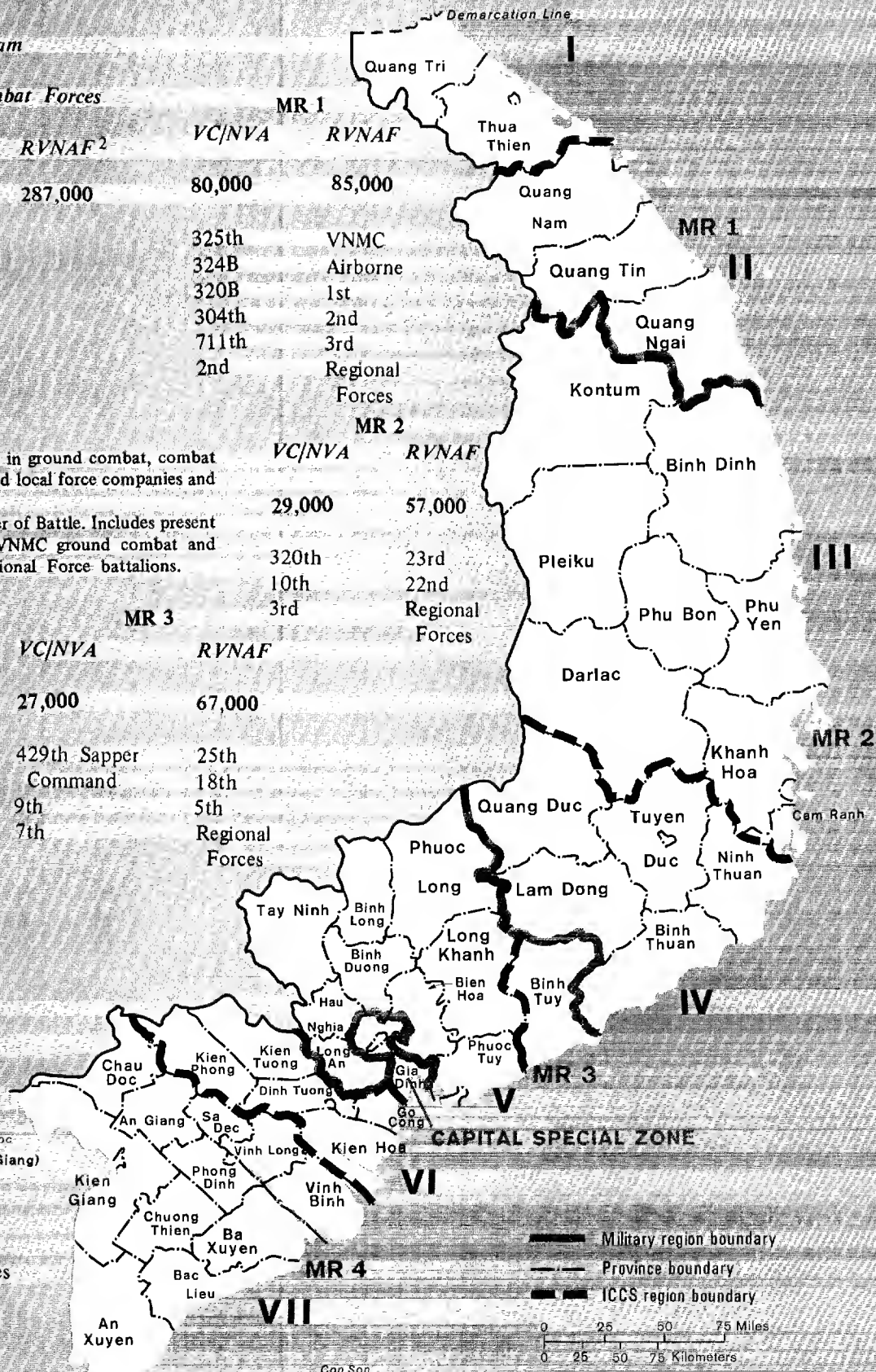
MR 4

VC/NVA	RVNAF
27,000	78,000

5th
1st

21st
9th
7th

44th Special
Tactical Zone
Regional Forces



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